

PAPERS READ

BEFORE THE

LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1911.

---

"History herself, as seen in her own workshop."

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THADDEUS STEVENS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE  
OMNIBUS BILL.

THE NEWSPAPERS ON THE CHRISTIANA RIOT.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER MEETING.

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VOL. XV. NO. 10.

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS PER COPY.

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LANCASTER, PA.  
1911.



HISTORICAL PAPERS AND ADDRESSES

OF THE

LANCASTER COUNTY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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VOLUME XV

1911

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THE CHRISTIANA RIOT AND THE SLAVERY  
QUESTION PRIOR TO THAT EVENT  
AND SUBSEQUENTLY.

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LANCASTER, PA.

1911

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# THADDEUS STEVENS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE OMNIBUS BILL

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In deference to the writer and at his special request this paper appears in the spelling recommended by the Simplified Spelling Board:

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Quotations showing that slavery was regarded as a divine institution, and that negroes were to be kept in everlasting bondage in fulfilment of the curs pronounced on Canaan:

"It is a fearful abuse of God's word when men refer to the curs of Canaan in defence of American slave-traffic, and slave-holding, as is done in the Southern portions of the United States."—Lange's Commentary on Gen., p. 342, first column.

"I do not propose to discuss the justis or injustis of slavery as an abstract proposition. . . . It is enuf for me elsewher to know that it was establisht by decre of Almighty God, that it is sanctiond in the Bible in both Testaments from Genesis to Revelation."—Jefferson Davis in U. S. Senate, February 13, 1850.

"He (the negro) by nature or by the curs of Canaan is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system."—A. H. Stevens, 1861.

"Indeed, it would scarcely excite surprise if with the impious audacity of those who projected the tower of Babel they (the aboiitionists) should attempt to scale the battlements of heven and remonstrate with the God of wisdom for having put the mark of Cain and the curs of Ham upon the

African race insted of the European.”  
—Gov. McDuffie of S. Car., Message,  
1835.

**The Attitude of Buchanan On the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia.**

“That senator (Mr. Buchanan) presented from the peple of his own State a petition for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. . . . . He presented it as a matter of respect to those who had enclosed it to him, but he moved that it be rejected, and made a speech in favor of its rejection.”—Jefferson Davis, in United States Senate, February 13, 1850.

**Preliminary Remarks in Extenuation of the Imperfections of the Paper.**

The Hon. James Bryce, in his History of the Holy Roman Empire, p. 50, says: “The interest of history lies not least in this, that it shows us how men hav at different times entertained holely different notions respecting the relation to one another of the same ideas or the same institutions.”

Dr. Arnold, in the preface to his great history of Rome, says: “I am wel aware of the great difficulty of giving liveliness to a narrativ which necessarily gets all its facts at second hand. . . . One who is himself a statesman and orator may relate the political contests even of remote ages with sumthing of the spirit of a contemporary; for his own experience realizes to him in a great mezure the scenes and the characters which he is describing.”

It is, therefore, to be expected that the account which wil be given of the Great Commoner's part in the strenuous Congressional contest over the Omnibus Bil by one who has stood aloof from political activity wil lack

the vividness in presentation of one who participated in those struggles and witnessed those exciting scenes in the national capital—the preludes of the Civil War.

#### THADDEUS STEVENS' ATTITUDE TOWARD OMNIBUS BILL.

The first and essential qualification of the historian is truthfulness. The omission or suppression of the disagreeable is as inadmissible as the addition or interpolation of the agreeable. The witness before the world as well as before the court of justice must tell the whole truth, but to speak the whole truth concerning Thaddeus Stevens in this community requires some courage; for he has become almost a saint in the eyes of that people whose emancipation he advocated with all his heart and all his mental powers; and as the successful obstructionist whose great oration is believed to have turned the tide and consequently to have prevented the repeal of the law on which is based and out of which has grown our present magnificent system of public instruction, he stands deservedly high in the estimation of all friends of universal education. His name has indeed almost become a synonym for education, liberation and political equality and educational institutions in cities and towns are proud to bear the name of Thaddeus Stevens.

The subject assigned to me is limited to a single act of the 31st session of Congress, 1849-50, to the beginning of the career of Thaddeus Stevens as a member of the national house of representatives. Moreover, I am not to duplicate what has been presented by Mr. Atlee in his paper on Stevens and slavery. It should be remembered that the great controversy of the time was carried on chiefly in the Senate where Calhoun and Jefferson

Davis spoke for the South, Clay and Benton for the Border States and Webster and Seward for the North-east.

"The Senate, February 5th and 6th, proceeded to the consideration of the following Resolutions, submitted by Mr. Clay on the 29th of January:"

**Senator Clay's Resolutions, Also Calld  
The Omnibus Bil.**

"It being desirable for the peace, concord and harmony of the union of these states, to settle and adjust amicably all existing questions of controversy between them, arising out of the institution of slavery, upon a fair, equitable, and just basis:

"Therefore: 1st Resolved, That California, with suitable boundaries, ought upon her application to be admitted as one of the States of this Union, without the imposition by Congress of any restriction in respect to the exclusion or introduction of slavery within those boundaries.

2d. Resolved, That as slavery does not exist by law, and is not likely to be introduced into any of the territory acquired by the United States from the Republic of Mexico, it is inexpedient for Congress to provide by law either for its introduction into or exclusion from any part of the said territory; and that appropriate territorial governments ought to be established by Congress in all of the said territory not assigned as the boundaries of the proposed State of California, without the adoption of any restriction or condition on the subject of slavery.

3d. Resolved, That the western boundary of the State of Texas ought to be fixed on the Rio del Norte commencing one marine league from its mouth, and running up that river to the southern line of New Mexico;

thence with that line eastwardly, and so continuing in the same direction to the line as established between the United States and Spain, excluding any portion of New Mexico, whether lying on the east or west of that river.

4th. Resolved, That it be proposed to the state of Texas that the United States will provide for the payment of all that portion of the legitimate and bona fide public debt of that State contracted prior to its annexation to the United States and for which the duties on foreign imports were pledged by the said State to its creditors, not exceeding the sum of \$—, in consideration of the said duties so pledged having been no longer applicable to that object after the said annexation, but having thenceforward become payable to the United States; and upon the condition also that the said State of Texas shall, by some solemn and authentic act of her legislature, or of a convention, relinquish to the United States any claim which it has to any part of New Mexico.

5th. Resolved, That it is inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while that institution continues to exist in the State of Maryland, without the consent of that State, without the consent of the people of the District and without just compensation to the owners of the slaves within the District.

6th. But Resolved, That it is expedient to prohibit within the District the slave trade in slaves brought into it from States or places beyond the limits of the District either to be sold therein as merchandise or to be transported to other markets without the District of Columbia.

7th. Resolved, That more effectual provision ought to be made by law according to the requirement of the

constitution for the restitution and delivery of persons bound to service or labor in any State who may escape into any other State or Territory in the Union.

And 8th. Resolved, That Congress has no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States, but the admission or exclusion of slaves brought from one into another of them depends exclusively upon their own particular laws. —App. to Cong. Globe, part I, p. 115—31st Congress 1849-50.

These are the resolutions which President Taylor hapily denominated the Omnibus Eil, as being intended to satisfy, as far as conditions then permitted, all parts of the country. As a hole, they wer not adopted, but severally and substantially they wer enacted into law. Mr. Stevens did not await their arrival in the Hous, but on the 20th of February, the Hous being in Committee of the Hole on the State of the Union, on the reference of the President's message, he made a violent attack on slavery in general and on the return of fugitiv slaves in particular. As this subject was assigned to and treated by Mr. Atlee, it can find no place here.

On the tenth of June he made another and even fiercer attack on the peculiar institution, but this has also received attention in Mr. Atlee's paper, which forbids attention to be given to it here. To one thing, I may, however, be allowed to call attention: it is this, that in both speeches Mr. Stevens always castigates his Southern opponents with more consideration than those from the North.



**A Democratic Colleg's Reply to Thad.  
Stevens' First Speech On the Sub-  
ject of Slavery in the  
District of Columbia.**

An extract from the speech of Mr. Ross, the member from Bucks county, in reply to Stevens, and the latter's rejoinder in the beginning of his second speech, will abundantly illustrate this.

"Sir, if my colleg (Mr. Stevens) when he addrest the committee, had raisd his eyes to the portrait of Washington frowning at his ignobl attempt to excite one section of the union agenst the other; or, if the hart of that member had throbd with even one patriotic impuls, he would hav shrunk back to his seat coverd with shame and remors for his libel upon the government of his cuntry. Sir, I envy not the feelings of any one who can rise in his place, and in a deliberately prepared speech, pronounce the government of his cuntry a despotism. I envy not the man who can thus defame the memories of Washington, and Franklin and Madison and of the other sages and patriots of the Revolution by whom this constitution was formd. No, sir, I envy no such man, and I would leav him alone in his shame if a sens of duty did not require me to notis sum other passages of that most extraordinary speech. In refering to the cours of the South that member has dared to speak of his Democratic colleags in the following indecent and insulting language:

"You have more than once frightened the tame North from its propriety, and found "doughfaces" enuf to be your tools. And when you lackt a given number, I take no pride in saying, you wer sure to find them in old Pennsylvania who (which?) in former years has rankt a portion of her delegation among your most submissiv

slaves. But I hope with sum fears that the race of "doughfaces" is extinct. I do not see how it could wel be otherwise. They wer an unmanly, an unviril race, incapabl, according to the laws of nature, of reproduction. I hope they hav left no descendants. The old ones ar deep in their graves. For them, I am sure, ther is no resurrection for they were soulles."

But he even went stil further, and denounced every northern man who did not vote for the slavery restriction 'as a traitor to liberty and recreant to his God.' Sir, I may wel ask whether this is the representativ hall of the nation! whether we ar the fre representatives of a fre peple, or the "submissiv slaves" which my colleag has charged that we ar? for surely, language so offensiv, and impudence so unblushing hav never heretofore been seen or herd in any respectabl assemblage of men. I know, Sir, that it should be treated with the scorn and contempt which every honorabl mind must feel for its author. It is an old proverb and as tru as it is old that the bad tung of a bad man can defame no one. Pennsylvania knows that member. With deep humiliation she acknowledges the acquaintance. His history has been the history of her wrongs and her misfortunes. But, sir, the memories of the past hav long since placed an impassabl gulf between him and her. She has affixt a brand upon him, as deep and as indelibl as the wrongs which she sufferd at his hands wer grievous and intolerabl. Yes, Sir, the day of mischief ther has past and the Democracy of Pennsylvania may wel laugh to scorn his vulgar, indecent and unmanly abuse not only of her own representatives, but of her southern brethren also. In a mind constituted as is that member's, no dout sum apology may be found

for this extraordinary speech. If, Sir, I had ever been an applicant for high office under the General Government, and had been defeated by the South with equal bitterness. [The office of Speaker]; if, Sir, I were so degraded in feeling as to desire to raise the negro to social and political equality with the white man, perhaps I too might denounce the slaveholder as recreant to his God. If, Sir, I were so insensible of the dignity of my position and so lost to all sense of propriety as to be regardless of what was due to my colleagues and to this House, perhaps, I too might stigmatize as doughfaces every one who did not think as I thought and vote as I voted. Or, if, Sir, I had been on any occasion a traitor to liberty, and had, by force of arms, endeavored to treat an election as if it had never taken place (the Buckshot war), perhaps I too might denounce as traitors every northern Representative who stood by the constitution of his country. But, Sir, there is one thing I could not do; I could not rise in my place, and utter these sentiments, just after I had voted for a slave holder for President (Zach. Taylor was a slave holder. He was the Whig candidate), in preference to another candidate who was born, educated, and lived on free soil (Lewis Cass, the Democratic candidate); and in preference to another candidate who was the embodiment of the principles which I professed (Van Buren, the Free Soil candidate). Nor, Sir, could I rise in my place and so defame the character of good old Democratic Pennsylvania as to represent that she participated in any such sentiments.....No, Sir, Pennsylvania entertains no such sentiments or feelings.....No son of hers, who had been born upon her soil, and had breathed in early life her pure mountain air, would have given

utterance to such sentiments, etc.” We will now listen to an extract from the speech of Mr. Stevens on the 10 of June, a rejoinder to the replies made to his first speech:

“I do not remember one of the numerous gentlemen who have referred to my remarks who has attempted to deny one of the facts, or refute one of the arguments; they have noticed them merely to vituperate their author. To such remarks there can be no reply by him who is not willing to place himself on a level with blackguards. I cannot enter that arena. I will leave the filth and the slime of Billingsgate to the fishwomen and to their worthy coadjutors, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Millson), from N. Carolina (Mr. Stanly), from Kentucky (Mr. Stanton), from Tennessee (Mr. Williams), and all that tribe. With them I can have no controversy. When I want to combat with such opponents and such weapons I can find them any day by entering the fish market without defiling this hall.

I beg those respectable fishladies however to understand that I do not include my colleague from Bucks county among those whom I deem fit to be their associates. I would not so degrade them.

“There is in the natural world, a little, spotted, contemptible animal which is armed by nature with a fetid, volatile, penetrating virus, which so pollutes whoever attacks it, as to make him offensive to himself and all around him for a long time. Indeed, he is almost incapable of purification. Nothing, Sir, no insult shall provoke me to crush so filthy a beast.”

In his first speech made Feb. 20th, 1850, he had given utterance with no uncertain sound as to how he would regard northern members who should vote to permit the extension of sla-

very or its possible introduction into the recently acquired territory. He said: "Sir, for myself, I should look upon any northern man, enlightened by a northern education, who would directly or indirectly, by omission or commission, by basely voting or skulking, permit it (slavery) to spread over one rood of God's free earth as a traitor to liberty and recreant to his God."

The friends of Mr. Stevens cannot but wish that his language had not been such as, to some extent, at least, if not entirely, to justify "The Intelligencer" of March 5, 1850, saying "That he was the same bold, reckless demagogue that he ever was." "He mostly abused the southern people." That southern members regarded his language as vulgar, as not fit to be used in the halls of legislation and in the presence of the ladies in the galleries is no doubt true, and was loudly asserted by the southerners.

On the motion that the question as to the admission of California, made February 8, 1850, by those who feared that that State would be admitted as a free State, be laid on the table (Cong. Globe, p. 375) Stevens voted in the negative because he wanted a debate on the question, and this afforded him the first opportunity to be heard on the slavery question.

For a motion having been made to adjourn, Stevens voted no and it was lost by 155 to 43. Mr. McEllernard then moved that the House go into a Committee of the Whole, which was voted down; Stevens voting no. It was again moved that the House adjourn, and the motion was lost again, Stevens voting no. Another motion to go into a Committee of the Whole was lost by 110 to 81, Stevens voting in the negative. Another motion to adjourn and one to go into Committee

of the Hole were lost, Stevens voting as before. (Cong. Globe, pp. 376-377.)

After fifteen motions to adjourn made that same day, the Hous did finally adjourn without a division, Stevens having voted in the negativ every time but the last. (Cong. Globe, pp. 379-385.)

As the Hous was constituted of 112 Democrats, 105 Whigs and 13 Fre Soilers, these tactics wer evidently resorted to to prevent debate and if possibl the admission of California as a fre state. To this preventing of debate "The Intelligencer probably alludes when it says of Stevens that until about two weeks ago he was quiet, and that a great many members wisht him to remain so." His speeches fully justified their fears of the eruption of that volcano. The substance of these having been given by Mr. Atlee as already stated, they wil not receiv further attention here. It may be wel, however, to call attention to what he contended for point by point.

1—That Congres has exclusiv power to legislate for the territories. He bases his opinions on decisions of the Supreme Court and on the rights derived from the acquisition by war and treaty, but he explicitly denies that "the Constitution follows the flag," as as a matter of cours; but with great vigor appealing to fundamental principles as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and Bills of Rights he denies it the right to legislate slavery into any territory.

2—That Congress has the power to admit new States into the Union, but that those States be formd of territory previously belonging to the Union.

3—That the strongest motiv for acquiring California and New Mexico was that ther might be more territory into which slavery might be intro-

duced, and that Texas had been admitted for the same reason.

4—That "every man may take his property with him" into the territory of the United States, "conforming to the local law when he gets ther."

5—That he will never consent to the admission of another slave state into the Union.

On the motion made July 29, 1850, that California be admitted Stevens calld for the yeas and nays on a motion made to adjourn. After much filibustering, consisting of motions to appeal, to lay on the table, to amend, to prevent the admission of California, the victory was finally won, September 7, 1850.

On all motions Stevens consistently stood by his guns, resolutely opposing the spread of slavery. On the second of the Compromise measures, the bill organizing New Mexico and Utah as a territory without the mention of slavery, which was added as an amendment or rider to the bill defining the northern boundary of Texas and paying her ten millions for assenting to such demarcation, Mr. Stevens spoke in part as follows:

".....We ar askt to add fifty thousand square miles of our territory now free, to Texas, and surrender it to slavery and give ten millions to pay her for taking it. Sir, if Texas wer to giv us ten millions, I would not sel it to her for such a purpose.....I would do ful justice to Texas. I would not take a foot of land which belongs to her. Nor would I giv her any to train her slaves upon." The bill past the Hous September 4, 1850, and thus the second, third and fourth of Clay's resolutions were substantially adopted. The sixth and seventh of Clay's resolutions past September 9, 1850. The seventh was the one out of which the fugitiv slave law was to be

evolved. I hav not been able to find any extended remarks or any speech made by Mr. Stevens on this bil. In his previous speech on the general subject of slavery he had however included a discussion on the fugitiv slave law as it then stood and with the non-observance of which both Clay and Webster charged the North. I will make a short extract from his 10th of June speech:

"The distinguisht Senator from Kentucky (Mr. Clay) wishes further to make it the duty of all bystanders to aid in the capture of fugitivs; to join in the chase and run down the prey. This is more than my constituents wil ever grant. They wil strictly abide by the constitution. The slave holder may pursue his slave among them with his own foren myrmidons, unmolested except by their frowning scorn. But no law that tyranny can pas wil ever induce them to join the hue and cry after the trembling wrech who has escaped from unjust bondage. Their fair land made by nature and their own honest toil, as fertil and as luvly as the Vale of Tempe, shal never becum the hunting ground on which the bloodhounds of slavery shall cours their prey and command them to join the hunt."

The enacting of the fugitiv slave law was the work chiefly of the extreme South, and was "forced upon the North for other reasons than the desire to recuver lost property." The motiv of its advocates was to humbl the North for having forced upon them the bitter medicin of fre California."

It was past by their votes. "Thirty-three representativs from the North wer either absent or paired or dodged th vote." (Rhodes, Vol. V, 183.)

After the vote was announced Stevens suggested "that the Speaker



should send a page to notify the members on our side of the Hous that the fugitiv slave bil has been disposed of and that they may now cum back into the Hall."

In harmony with this ar the remarks of Jefferson Davis: "Sir, the northern majority on that occasion allowd the southern minority to pas the bil. The north did not pas it. They did not meet their obligations to the constitution and their faith to the Union. Seats wer vacated and southern members wer allowd to pas a law which had to be executed at the North." (Von Holst 1850—4, p. 27.)

Note—I may be allowd to ad. altho this is not included in the topic asignd, that on February 16, 1852, Stevens presented a petition signd by citizens of Lancaster county praying for the repeal of the fugitiv slave law. (Cong. Globe, 26,668).

## THE NEWSPAPERS AND THE CHRISTIANA RIOT

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In the recent papers that have been written for our society on the subject of Slavery and the Underground Railway, up to the time of the Christiana Riot, we have been told in detail how the news was carried from station to station, and how messages were transmitted from the South to the North in the interest of escaping slaves, all, however, in a very quiet and cautious manner, and by the observance of every precaution to avoid these messages from being miscarried, or improperly conveyed.

I will now endeavor to show you how rapidly the news of the tragedy spread throughout the various parts of the country and what expressions were given through some of the newspapers of those times, showing the terrible opposition abolitionists and fugitives were obliged to face.

The gathering of this information has been a very trying undertaking. Many of the publishing companies which were then in existence cannot now be found and few have kept complete files of their papers. On the other hand, where the files do cover that period, and I have been in communication with the owners of them, there were comparatively few instances in which the owners appeared to be willing to look for references in files dating back sixty years ago. Some of the editorials from which I have taken extracts or which I have quoted are very emphatic in their expres-

sions, either in commending or condemning the Riot.

Although the newspapers all over the country were hotly agitating this tragedy for some days before our Lancaster papers took it up, yet that is no indication that our home people were not alive to the situation, for we find that on Friday, the day after the riot, District Attorney Thompson, of this city, was there and had issued warrants for the arrest of a number of suspected persons. Upon making inquiry at the office of the Lancaster Intelligencer, from which office the only daily paper was published in this city, at that time, I was told that the files for 1851 could not be found, and appeared to have been lost.

The "Examiner and Herald," at that time a weekly publication in this city, in their issue of September 17 had the following locals:

One and one-fourth columns describing the tragedy, two columns referring to the first twenty-four arrests which had then been made and the examination of witnesses and one-half column naming the additional arrests, including Samuel Williams, who is said to have carried the news from Philadelphia to Christiana of the contemplated raid by the Gorsuch party. This issue has also two editorials of five inches each and one of three inches.

In the next issue of this paper, September 24, one and one-half columns give further testimony by the witnesses, and a one-half column article gives an anonymous letter under date of September 22 by a resident of Christiana referring to the unjust criticisms that were made at home and abroad against the citizens of the town. He writes: "The public mind has been excited to a very great extent in this immediate neighborhood as well as

abroad, and from all that has appeared in public print an odium of an unpleasant character has been, either by design or otherwise, cast upon the inhabitants of this place. Now, it is said this murder was committed at Christiana, while the place at which it occurred is not within two miles from this village, and not a single white man from this place was at or near the place at the time, neither did one of them know that such an affray was in contemplation until after the occurrence when the first impulse was to hasten to the relief of the strangers." He then relates how the citizens offered all possible help under the trying circumstances, how Joseph D. Pownall, Esq., issued his warrant as soon as the facts were sufficiently known to justify him in so doing and placed it in the hands of the constable.

Concluding, he says: "We know humanity was outraged—life cruelly sported with and destroyed—our laws set at defiance and resisted, yet let us assure you we had neither heart nor hand in this matter until the painful intelligence of its fatal consequences reached our ears, and then did we cooperate manfully as good citizens and republicans with the officers in carrying out the grand object—the bringing to justice of the man-defying, law-breaking insurgents."

On October 1 this paper devotes two and one-fourth columns to the further examination of witnesses, after which, the witnesses all having been heard, one and one-third of a column gives the charge of Judge Kane in the United States District Court, one-third column on "The Law of Treason" and one-third column on the effect of this occurrence on the political situation, in which article Attorney Gen-

eral Franklin received a letter from Rev. J. S. Gorsuch, which was published in the "Baltimore County Advocate of September 18, in which Rev. Gorsuch assailed the Governor in the most vindictive terms and imputed to him and to the Attorney General inactivity and gross dereliction of duty in regard to the murder of his father. In a later letter, dated September 25, he retracts and<sup>a</sup> apologizes for his charges against the Attorney General, but takes occasion to reaffirm his offensive imputations against the Governor.

Franklin, however, states that he cannot consent to be placed in a different position from the Governor in this matter, for they were in such close touch with each other in every move made that either one is entitled to the same criticism or credit which may be given.

The Weekly American, of Waterbury, Conn., in its issue of September 19, under its department headed, "The Week" says: "The deplorable effects of the 'higher law' agitationists have been carried out at Christiana, Pa., by the shedding of human blood and murder, in the late attempt of an owner of a fugitive slave to regain his property. These higher law men, like the Cuban agitators, are morally responsible for encouraging and inviting such resistance to the laws, and as such must account to God and their country." This same paper, under "Editorial Brevities," has an article about twice as long as the above account.

In a letter from Mr. Spafford, of the "Historical Society of Pennsylvania," addressed to Miss Clark, we learn that the Philadelphia Ledger on September 12, 1851, has a paragraph on the murder at Christiana under the

heading of "Local Affairs." On the 13th, under the same heading, there is a trifle less than a half column on "The Lancaster County Riot and Murder," and a brief editorial entitled "Fruits of the Higher Law." An editorial of more than a half column on "Cause and Effect" appears on the 15th, and in the issue of the 16th there is a short editorial on "The Christiana Tragedy." The 17th, under "News," has "The Christiana Tragedy," and quotes from the "Lancaster Tribune." This is merely a paragraph, but the same issue has two-thirds of a column, "Excitements," in an editorial, in addition to nearly a column under "Local Affairs" on "The Christiana Murder." A quarter of a column on "The Authors of Mischief," quoting from the "New York Courier" and the Lancaster Examiner, appears on the 18th under "News." The issue of the 19th has a column on the "History of the Christiana Tragedy by one of Mr. Gorsuch's Sons." On the 20th, in the news column, "The Governor of Maryland on the Christiana Riot," takes a half column to tell of the "Christiana Outrage," also under "News." A paragraph on the 23d is devoted to "Important Disclosures Anticipated," and on the 24th inst. a short account of "The Lancaster Authorities."

There are said to be two sides to all questions, but it is surprising to notice how little support the press of those days gave to the efforts of the Abolitionists, particularly so throughout the anti-slavery sections of the United States. Take, for instance, an editorial copied from one of the daily Philadelphia (Whig) newspapers, which reads as follows: "There can be no difference of opinion concerning the shocking affair

which occurred at Christiana on Thursday, the resisting of a law of Congress by a band of armed negroes whereby the majesty of the Government was defied and life taken in one and the same act. There is something more than even a murderous riot in all this. It is an act of insurrection, we might, considering the peculiar class and condition of the guilty parties, almost call it a servile insurrection—if not also one of treason. Fifty, eighty, or one hundred persons, whether white or black,,who are deliberately in arms for the purpose of resisting the law, even the law for the recovery of fugitive slaves, are in the attitude of levying war against the United States, and doubly heavy becomes the crime of murder in such a case, and doubly serious the accountability of all who have any connection with the act as advisors, suggesters, countenancers or accessories in any way whatever.”

Another Philadelphia daily paper has this to say: “The unwarrantable outrage committed last week at Christiana, Lancaster county, is a foul stain upon the fair name and fame of our State. We are pleased to see that officers of the Federal and State Governments are upon the tracks of those who were engaged in the Riot, and that several arrests have been made. We do not wish to see the poor, misled blacks, who participated in the affair, suffer to any great extent, for they were but tools. The men who are really chargeable with treason against the United States Government, and with the death of Mr. Gorsuch, an estimable citizen of Maryland, are, unquestionably, white, with hearts black enough to incite them to the commission of any crime equal in atrocity to that committed in Lancaster county. Penn-

sylvania has now but one course to pursue, and that is to aid, and warmly aid, the United States in bringing to condign punishment every man engaged in the Riot. Let her in this resolve be just and fearless."

In the issue of the *Indiana State Sentinel* (weekly) for September 25, 1851, appears, under date September 18, an account of the Riot taken from the *Baltimore Sun*. Under date of September 19 is an editorial to the following purport:

"This is a most unfortunate event for the free colored population, and will produce great excitement in the country. They had, no doubt, been prepared and trained for the terrible deed by those white neighbors, who are equally guilty with the poor, misguided blacks. White men and Abolitionists prompted them to the deed. All engaged in the transaction are guilty of murder and treason. Such are the terrible consequences of preaching resistance to law and invoking the religious prejudices of the country against an institution which has existed since creation, and appealing to a law above the Constitution to justify every act of blood and slaughter. Unless the friends of law and order stand firm and united, a terrible war of races is to occur, which must exterminate the weaker."

Under date of September 20, in the same issue of the paper, is a copy of an editorial comment in the "*Pennsylvanian*" of September 13, and a short item consisting of quotations from various sources against the fugitive slave laws.

Mr. Bernard C. Steiner, librarian of the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore, having inspected the files of newspapers at the Maryland Historical Society, writes the following: "There are three dailies for 1851, two



morning papers, the Sun (Democratic) and the American (Whig), also an evening paper named the Evening Argus (Democratic)."

On September 12 the Argus prints half a column from the Baltimore County Jacksonian, a narrative of the Riot. On the 18th it prints half a column of news from the Philadelphia Bulletin, and a quarter of a column editorial entitled "Now Is the Time For Action," stating "if Pennsylvania will not give redress, Maryland must redress her own wrong." On the 14th a third of a column of news, concerning the late "Abolition and Negro Outrages," is printed. On the 17th there is a quarter of a column editorial praising the remarks of Judge Z. C. Lee at a meeting held on the 15th. On the 23d J. S. Gorsuch's letter to Governor Johnston is printed.

The Sun for September 12 has a brief notice of a telegraphic dispatch concerning the Riot. On the 13th it prints two-thirds of a column of news, chiefly from the Baltimore County Jacksonian and the Philadelphia Inquirer, and a brief editorial speaking of the gross and murderous outrage at the instigation of that diabolical spirit. On the 15th two-thirds of a column on the Christiana outrage is printed, partly from the Columbia Spy and Philadelphia Bulletin, with reference to a meeting at Towson town. A brief editorial on the the murderous outrage says that Governor Lowe will doubtless take prompt steps in the matter. On September 16th a brief editorial praises the action of the Federal and Pennsylvania authorities, and nearly three columns of news gives the report of testimony before the commission and Coroner's jury, from the Philadelphia North American, as well

as the resolutions of the Philadelphia meeting, a letter from Mr. Cadwallader, etc., to Governor Johnston, and his response, his proclamation, and extracts from editorials in the Philadelphia Inquirer and Ledger, the Washington Republic, and the resolutions passed at Towson. On September 17th, editorially, the Federal and Maryland authorities are praised, and nearly a column of news is given from the Philadelphia Ledger and Statesman, with a letter from a correspondent from Columbia and abstract of testimony before a commissioner. On September 18th nearly two columns of news include the resolution of Gorsuch's friends at Slade's tavern, a letter to the Washington Union, probably from Henry May, Deputy Attorney General, and a long letter from J. S. Gorsuch. On September 19 a brief editorial on arrests, the correspondence between Governor Lowe and the President, resolutions in Bartlett township from the Lancaster Examiner and of the Philadelphia meeting, fill nearly two columns. On the 20th brief editorial and Gorsuch's letter to Johnston. On the 22d a brief note from the Baltimore County Advocate is reprinted, defending Pennsylvania from lawlessness. On the 23d we find a brief note from the Philadelphia North American; on the 24th, a statement that the trial will be on October 6; on the 25th, the Lancaster Union's reply to J. S. Gorsuch; on the 26th, a half column editorial on indictment for treason, the latter from J. S. Gorsuch, and a third of a column on examination of prisoners. The American on September 12th has a brief note; on the 13th, two-thirds of a column account of the horrible affray, gathered from individuals; on the 15th, a third of a column from

the Philadelphia Bulletin and other sources; on the 16th, a long editorial on the crime of treason, and nearly a column of the evidence from the Philadelphia papers and the Towson resolves; on the 17th, one-quarter of a column from the Philadelphia Ledger and the Lancaster Union; on the 19th, one-quarter of a column from the Boston Courier; on the 20th, two-thirds of a column from the Boston Courier; on the 21st, two-thirds of a column of Lowe's correspondence with the President and extracts from the Philadelphia Ledger and the Jacksonian; on the 24th, short notices from the North American and the Ledger.

Mr. Samuel H. Ranck, a former Lancaster countian, who is now librarian of the Grand Rapids library, of Grand Rapids, Mich., copies a very interesting article on this subject from "The Grand Rapids Enquirer," of September 24, 1851. It is interesting in that the facts, as represented therein, are very much distorted. The statement is here made that the Gorsuch party, on their way to Christiana, encountered a negro man and boy, one of whom Mr. Gorsuch immediately recognized as one of his runaway slaves. Both negroes ran, pursued by the Gorsuch party, into the village, where they took refuge in a strongly fortified house, from which one of the negroes dropped a heavy billet of wood out of an upper story window, on one of the pursuing party, felling him to the earth. It further states that the body of the elder Gorsuch was shockingly mutilated, having been beaten with clubs, by the infuriated wretches, even after life was extinct. After the melee it is stated that Mr. Gorsuch's nephew, quite seriously wounded, made his way to York, Pa., the same night, and that after the shooting, such was the

violence that none of the survivors could remain to care for the wounded. This article, which is quite lengthy, has been carefully preserved in the archives of the society, where it may at any future time be referred to.

Through the courtesy of Dr. H. J. Herbein, Secretary of the Schuylkill County Historical Society, we learn that the *Miners' Journal*, of Pottsville, in its issue of September 13 gives an account of the riot. In its issue of the 27th it gives an account of the trial of the rioters. In the same issue is a lengthy editorial in which it is shown how an attempt was made to make political capital out of this accidental circumstance. Governor Johnston was at this time canvassing the State in the interest of his re-election as Chief Executive of the State, and was severely criticised for some of his actions in connection with this matter. The writer of this editorial quotes from "The Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch" the following:

"It really seems as if no subject is safe from the 'pickers and stealers' of professed politicians. Even crime and misfortune are to the unscrupulous partisans windfalls which are eagerly seized upon as affording opportunities for manufacturing political capital." He then gives a plain statement of the facts of the case—the riot—the arrests—the vigilance and efficiency of the officers—the excitement and indignation of the people of Lancaster county and elsewhere, etc., etc. It was a terrible state of things indeed, and yet, instead of immediately waiting upon the Governor, who was in the town at that very moment, and had been all that day, instead of paying the honor due to the representative of the Government of the Commonwealth, instead of going to him in deputation and beseeching him to

send that military force to Lancaster county, the leaders, having signed the appeal, separated and went to their homes. It was not until twenty-four hours afterward, during which time the fearful insurrection was raging at Christiana, that a letter addressed to the Governor was left at the bar of his hotel and handed to him by a servant. He then alludes to the crushing answer of the Governor, and the abortive attempt of the "political cooks" to reply, in which they "confess and avoid the Governor's statements and endeavor to cover themselves with a cloud by asserting that the crime of which the negroes were guilty was high treason, a question wholly irrelevant to the matter in hand, whether the State authorities performed their duty or not." This editorial, being quite lengthy, cannot be fully copied here, but has been placed on file in the archives of our society, and at a later time is supposed to be bound into the current volume of our society's publications.

Elisa May Willard, Reference Librarian of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, has supplied us with considerable material from several of the Pittsburgh papers.

On September 13, under the head of Telegraphic News, the Pittsburgh Gazette gives three inches to a brief description of the Riot. On the 15th they give two inches under a similar heading, and on the following day two telegraphic despatches of two inches each, still further describing the affair. In this issue they also have an editorial of one-half column. On the 18th appears another editorial of one-half column, in which the author believes that a sufficient cause for the fearful act may be found in the infamous party tactics of the Locofoco

press of the State, which has endeavored to identify the Whigs with the Abolitionists, and charge them with hostility to the Union and the fugitive slave law. Though wasted on white men this silliness has made an impression on the minds of the poor, ignorant blacks.

On September 19 this paper gives one column under "General News" to quotations from various other papers on this subject; also, three-fourths of a column editorial commenting on the proclamation of the Governor.

On September 13, "Der Freiheits Freund" (Freedom's Friend), a German paper of Pittsburgh, has a half-inch item under "Telegraphic News." On September 17 they have an editorial of one column fully describing the tragedy.

Some of the articles herein referred to have been found too lengthy to embody in this paper, and have, therefore, been prepared so as to permanently preserve them with this paper in the archives of our society.

## MINUTES OF DECEMBER MEETING

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Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 1, 1911.

The Lancaster County Historical Society held its regular monthly session this evening in the rooms in the free library building. There was a good attendance of members. The president, Mr. Steinman, was in the chair.

The acting librarian, Miss Lottie M. Bausman, announced the following donations since the last meeting: Bound volumes—History of St. John's Reformed Church of Riegelsville, Pa., from B. F. Fackenthal, Jr., Riegelsville; History of Royal Arch Chapter, No. 43, 1809-1909, from Andrew H. Hershey; Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology; Academy of Pacific Coast History, Vol. 1, from University of California; The Desecration and Profanation of the Pennsylvania Capitol, from Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker. Pamphlets—The William Penn Memorial, 1911, from Pennsylvania Society; Pamphlets Nos. 1 and 2 of Volume 10 of the North Carolina Historical Society; Pamphlet No. 1, Volume 1, of the University of California Publications in History; Linden Hall Echo; International Conciliation, 3 numbers; Fourth Annual Historic Commemoration of Chester County Historical Society; two old almanacs for years 1841 and 1845, from Miss Anna Messenkop. By purchase—Scharf and Westcott's History of Philadelphia (3 volumes); Watson's Annals of Philadelphia (3 volumes); History of Montgomery

County; History of Dauphin and Lebanon Counties; 1908 Year Volume of Notes and Queries; four documents, 1760, 1776, 1743, 1770; "Funeral Obsequies of Hon. Thaddeus Stevens," from M. N. Brubaker, Mt. Joy.

B. Maurice Eby, of Gap, was nominated for membership, and on motion Adam F. Spangler, of Ephrata, was elected a member.

On motion, an exchange of books with the Bucks County Historical Society was authorized.

On motion, the secretary was instructed to draw an order for the payment of \$5 to the housekeeper of the library building.

A. K. Hostetter reported the purchase for the society at the last Stan. V. Henkel sale of fourteen volumes of the society's proceedings, and, on motion, the secretary was instructed to draw an order for \$12.60 in payment of the bill.

On motion, the secretary was authorized to draw an order for \$25 in favor of the Smith free library for the rental of the society's room.

On motion, it was decided not to take up one general subject for discussion by the society during the next year, but to receive papers on miscellaneous historical matters.

The following officers were placed in nomination: President, George Steinman; vice-presidents, F. R. Diefenderffer, Litt.D., and W. U. Hensel, Esq.; recording secretary, Chas. B. Hollinger; corresponding secretary, Miss Martha B. Clark; librarian, Miss Lottie M. Bausman; treasurer, A. K. Hostetter; executive committee, D. F. Magee, H. Frank Eshleman, Esq., D. B. Landis, G. F. K. Erisman, Mrs. Sarah B. Carpenter, Monroe B. Hirsh, R. K. Buehrle, J. L. Summy, L. B. Herr and Mrs. M. N. Robinson.

Dr. R. K. Buehrle submitted and



read a most entertaining paper on the subject, "Thaddeus Stevens' Attitude Towards the Omnibus Bill," the article being a portion of the supplementary matter of the slavery question prepared by a specially appointed committee. Mr. A. K. Hostetter also read a paper made up in great part of abstracts of newspaper articles from different parts of the country, and bearing on the slavery question and comments on the Christiana Riot.

A vote of thanks was extended to both Dr. Buehrle and Mr. Hostetter.

As the papers were the last of the report of the committee on supplementary slavery matter, the committee, on motion, was discharged.

The society then adjourned.





